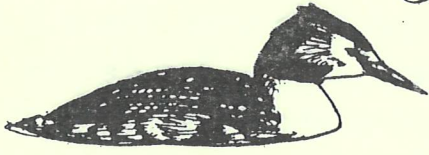


# *Frylde Bird Club*



NEWSLETTER No. 38

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## FROM THE CHAIR

Since attending meetings with N.C.C and R.S.P.B at Marton Mere and providing information to oppose planning applications it has become clear how important a role our club has to play in local conservation. Developers and other leisure interests will continue to threaten our major sites. If we are to continue to protect them, we must gather as much information as possible and have it ready to oppose any damaging proposals.

It is sad therefore to note that the number of members contributing records to our reports is falling. If anyone has a particular reason for not contributing records I would be glad to discuss it with them.

We also need to finish the breeding bird survey on time and publish the results, the finished document could then be lodged with Local Authorities. Some of you will probably be aware that the plans for Poulton Hall Farm have been rejected. In this case we were only able to provide piecemeal information on the site. This is an example where a published 'Breeding Atlas' would have been useful to Wyre Borough Council. All of us must help in this survey, not only to make the 'Atlas' as accurate as possible but also to reward Peter Guy and Andrew Cadman for all their hard work.

As you know, we have arranged to lead two walks for Wyre Borough Council. This is an excellent opportunity to spread the word. Please come along and help. There is little to match the feeling of satisfaction when you open the eyes of a new birdwatcher. We have all benefited in the same way, here is a chance to put something back into your birding.

Finally, this is the first newsletter produced by Alan Dawe. Please give him every encouragement in his difficult task.

Len Blacow

POINTS OF VIEW

The apparent lack of interest shown by the Nature Conservancy Council in Marton Mere is not a great surprise when you consider the fact that the N.C.C is merely a government department and that the government of the day is far from committed to nature conservation. Indeed, the N.C.C's grant for 1989/90 has been cut by 5% and this move has been seen by many at the N.C.C as a warning not to 'rock the boat' when it comes to sensitive issues such as that concerning the FLOW Country and Blanket Afforestation.

The N.C.C. was established by the Nature Conservancy Council Act of 1973 and its brief was to be 'The Governments Statutory Advisors on Nature Conservation while remaining free to express independant views'. The problem for the N.C.C. has been, and still is, that much of its scientific advice is inevitably going to be unpalatable to a Conservative government hell bent on unfettered free enterprise. The dilemma facing the N.C.C. is that it has to work with, and be funded by a government that has a profound lack of sympathy for, and understanding of the needs of nature conservation. Many leading conservationists now feel that the N.C.C is acting more and more on the basis of political expediency, not scientific evidence, and there is rumoured to be growing unrest at 'junior' level in the N.C.C at the lack of support from above.

The whole attitude of the present government, whether it be towards small S S S1'S such as the Mere or vast Eco systems such as the North Sea, is disturbing to Environmentalists and Conservationists. While groups such as Friends of the Earth, R.S.P.B. and Greenpeace etc. carry on to do the excellent work that they do, the government will continue to do nothing. It is only now waking up to the horrors of the North Sea - not because it cares about the pollution there, but because it has become a political issue amongst other European countries. Parts of the Irish sea are far worse than the worst parts of the North sea but it is not yet an international problem and will probably never become one as long as Eire continues to pollute it as much as the U.K does.

Unfortunately things do not look like getting any better at the N.C.C The new Director General, who was appointed in 1988 is a career Civil Servant and not even a recognised Conservationist. In the end it is nature conservation which will suffer the most for so called progress. How often has the excuse of employment or lack of it been used as a valid reason for the destruction of valuable sites, and how can we lecture Third World Countries on the conservation of tropical rainforest or complain about migrant shooting on the continent. Until we set our own house in order we can't.

S.M. MEREDITH

FOR FURTHER READING  
SEE B.B.C WILDLIFE (FEBRUARY 89)

REACTIONS AND COMMENTS TO ME PLEASE FOR INCLUSION IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER.  
EDITOR.

NORTH WEST SWAN STUDY

In 1988 a Mute Swan study group was formed to study Mute Swans in Lancashire, Cumbria, and the northern parts of Merseyside and Greater Manchester. The main aims of the group are to study the movements and the population changes of the swans that are to be found in the study area. In addition there will be some research into the genetics and diseases of the species.

The group consists mainly of ringers, and is assisted by the Wildfowl Trust and includes ecologists, conservationists and immunologists, all of whom have a commitment to nature conservation. The group also has the services of a consultant veterinary surgeon.

The group is catching as many swans as possible and fitting two types of rings, each having a unique combination of letters and numbers. One is the usual metal ring issued by the B.T.O and the other is a blue plastic ring with large letters that are easily read in the field and is issued by the Wildfowl Trust.

Once the swan has been ringed future sightings will enable the group to establish movement patterns, study breeding success of various pairs etc. It will also be possible to estimate population variations within the study area.

Already, from the 40 or so swans rung on Fleetwood marine lake, an individual (ring No. Z66698) rung there on 31.12.88 has been sighted at Rishton nr. Blackburn on 15.1.89 and was thought to have been setting up territory.

With all aspects of wildlife conservation it is important to have a full understanding of the particular needs of any relevant species. By undertaking the study the group will gain much more information, which will enable conservationists to provide improved habitats, thus ensuring the future of mu swans in our countryside. Viral diseases can also be recognised before the swan population is decimated.

Since the success of the study depends on future recording of ringed birds the group would be grateful if members of the bird club would contact them giving the following information:-

1. Exact location
2. Date
3. Ring No.
4. Number of swans seen
5. Was the swan an adult or immature
6. Other information i.e was it a family party etc.

The group would also be grateful for any information regarding unringed swans that have been frequently seen in one place. In addition information is required of any breeding sites used in the last 10 years.

If you require further information or wish to report a sighting please contact:- Wes HALTON.  
16 Broadgreen Gardens  
Farnworth. BOLTON. Tel: 0204 706014

(4)

or see myself - Seumus Eaves at the Bird Club meetings or phone me on Kirkham 685915 and I will pass the information on.

SEUMUS EAVES

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MARTON MERE

On March 19th a litter collection took place at the Mere. In the space of 1½ hours 12 volunteers managed to fill 30 binliner bags full of rubbish. Undoubtedly the speed in which the task was accomplished was due to the number of people who participated.

Many thanks to all those who helped.

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RECENT REPORTS : JANUARY and FEBRUARY

The weather throughout both months was characterised by a succession of depressions from the South Atlantic tracking steadily north eastwards and skirting northern Britain. Daily average temperature 3.5% above normal meant that at times it didn't really feel like winter! In fact it was the mildest mid-winter since 1974-75 and one of the five mildest this century.

JANUARY

At the coast the mild unseasonal conditions resulted in only a few sightings of Divers, Grebes or Sea Duck. A Red Throated Diver at Rossall Point on the 7th was the only record for the month whilst Great Crested Grebes were similarly scarce, singles being seen at Lane Ends and Thurnham; and a maximum of three at South Promenade and Ancho-sholme on the 3rd. 4 Scaup were off Rossall Point on the 8th and a second winter Mediterranean Gull was found there on the same date.

Strong westerly winds in mid month produced up to 40 Little Gulls feeding off the sewage outfall on Central Promenade and 47 Kittiwakes passed Starr Gate on the 14th.

2 Purple Sandpipers were present at Rossall throughout the month but these were upstaged by the 3 which appeared on the sea wall by South Shore Yacht Club on the 12th. A dead Knot bearing a B.T.O ring XR34386 was found on the tideline at St. Annes beach on the 3rd. This bird had been ringed at Formby Point on the 27th February 1987.

At LSANR 3 Jack Snipe were present on the 8th and 5 on the 22nd. Unfortunately one fell victim to an avian predator, its corpse being found on the 11th - presumably Maurice gave it a decent burial. Elsewhere, an immature was ringed at Bispham Marsh on the 2nd and an adult retrapped there on the 22nd. At Barnaby Sands on the 15th 2 were flushed accidentally, one was still present at the end of the month.

Inland on the 1st, up to 150 Pinkfeet came down to feed on meadows between Hardhorn and Singleton and in the same area 9 Herons were roosting by a

field edge. 11 Whooper and 4 Bewick swans were present at Bonds Farm Pilling on the 8th. The official Goose count on the 22nd produced a total of 4040 Pinkfeet; 3000 on the marsh between Pilling Water and Fluke Hall accompanied by 4 adult Bewicks; and 1040 at Staynall. 5 adult Whoopers were seen flying over the Pilling - Cockerham road on the 27th.

At the Mere an incredible 700 Teal were counted on the 3rd declining to 150 by the 29th. Mallard peaked at 350 on the same date. Maximum counts for other species were 65 Pochard, 65 Tufted Ducks, 35 Wigeon and 28 Shoveler. Also at the Mere 2 pairs of Goldeneye and 3 male Ruddy Duck were present. By the 29th 5 Great Crested Grebes had returned including 2 already in display.

Away from the Mere a female Scaup was on the CEGB pool on the 19th and 5 Shoveler at Bispham Marsh on the 2nd. On the River Wyre at Singleton a pair of Goosander with 3 male and 3 female Goldeneye were seen on the 1st. An injured female Wigeon at LSANR on the 1st was a 1st for the Reserve.

There were few raptors reported; these included Sparrowhawks at Clifton, Fleetwood, South Shore and Lane Ends; up to 6 Kestrels at the Mere; Peregrines at Fleetwood and St. Annes, the latter unsuccessfully chasing Redshanks.

A highlight of January was the influx of Short Eared Owls into the Fylde, no fewer than 34 birds being seen:- 10 at Clifton Marsh, 6 Marton Mere, 6 Stalmine Moss, 3 Weeton, 2 Lane Ends, Marton Moss, 2 Fleetwood, 2 Singleton and 1 at Arm Hill.

Single Grey Wagtails were noted on St Annes Moss on the 29th and over Blackpool town centre on the 31st. A pair of Stonechats were on the dunes near LSANR on the 2nd and later, on the 19th a single male was present at Fleetwood Tip.

A pair of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers were at Lytham Hall and pairs of Great Spotted Woodpeckers had been drumming since the beginning of the month. At the Hall a male and 2 female Bullfinches were seen on the 13th and a solitary male on the 19th.

Sightings of Fieldfares and Redwings were few and far between, 110 Fieldfares flying north over Clifton Hall to roost on the 22nd were noteworthy as were 20 Redwings roosting at Singleton on the 8th and 200 at Clifton Hall on the 15th. Bramblings were also in short supply; 2 with a flock of chaffinches at Warton Marsh on the 2nd and a female ringed at Singleton Hall were the only ones reported. Approximately 100 Chaffinch were roosting at the hall at the end of the month.

10 Long Tailed Tits appeared at Ribby on the 6th whilst 6 were reported from Lytham Hall in midmonth.

40 Yellowhammers were seen on the stubble behind Barnaby's Sands on the 15th, whilst back at the coast 8 Snow Buntings were seen on the 8th at Fleetwood near the Marine Lake - poor fare when compared with the flocks of Twite and Snow Buntings of the previous winter.

FEBRUARY

Seawatching improved insofar as it was at least possible to count the Eider off Rossall (460 on the 25th) and the Common Scoter from Starr Gate (260 on the 18th). Calmer conditions at Rossall on the 25th revealed 2 Red Throated Divers, an unidentified Auk, 3 Red Breasted Mergansers and a Great Crested Grebe in summer plumage. One of the two Purple Sandpipers at Rossall since the start of the month roosted at the drained Marine Lake with approximately 200 Turnstone.

19 Little Gulls were at the Central Promenade sewage outfall on the 14th reducing to 8 on the 18th. 4 Great Crested Grebes were off Central Promenade on the 17th with a Coot (the first since 1974; ES). On the 19th from the luxury of the Starr Gate shelter in a force 6 westerly, a single Fulmar was observed easing its way southwards along with 2 Gannets and 4 Kittiwakes.

At Fleetwood early in the month a small adult and 2 first Winter Glaucous Gulls were seen on the fields opposite the Tip. There have been no reports of the regular Fleetwood adult since late December.

The continuing mild weather brought a decline in the number of wildfowl at the Mere. By midmonth there were 250 Mallard, 140 Teal, 10 Shoveler, 40 Pochard, 35 Tufted Duck, 4 Goldeneye and 3 Ruddy Duck plus 2 Cormorant present. At the I.C.I pool 26 Shoveler, 2 Scaup and a female Pintail were present. On the 28th and at the nearby C.E.G.B pool 3 Little Gulls were observed on the 15th. Newton Marsh held 100 Wigeon and 4 Pochard on the 26th.

The injured female Wigeon (remember; a first for LSANR) reported in the January notes and seen to be recovering on the 12th and 15th of this month obviously came to an untimely end when its remains were discovered on the 26th. Did Maurice bury it alongside the Jack Snipe? Despite the mayhem continuing around them 4 live Jack Snipe were seen on the Reserve on the 26th and a single was still present at Armhill at the end of the month.

At Fairhaven Marine Lake 2 males and a female Shoveler were noted on the 8th whilst an oiled male Common Scoter was at the Mere on the 12th. The male Eider returned to Fairhaven Lake on the 22nd.

On the 26th 66 Black Tailed Godwits were feeding on flooded fields between Singleton and Hardhorn and on the same date 40 on wet fields at Norcross.

The monthly Goose count took place on the 11th with 1000 Pinkfeet and 1 immature Greenland Whitefront at Eagland Hill plus 3,500 Pinkfeet at Stalmine Moss. By the 26th of the month 4000 Pinkfeet were at Eagland Hill and amongst them was a single leucistic bird.

An adult Mediterranean Gull was discovered at Knowle High School playing fields on the 23rd and no prizes for guessing who discovered it. On the 27th 35 Redshank walked the same field where normally there is only an odd one or two! Raptor sightings for the month consisted of 3 sightings of

Sparrowhawk at Clifton Hall, a Merlin over St. Annes Pier on the 8th and a Peregrine at Lane Ends on the 12th. 4 Short Eared Owls were still present on Stalmine Moss at month end plus one at Moss Edge.

Stonechats were again at Fleetwood on the 2nd and the 15th. 80 Fieldfare were at Clifton Hall on the 25th and 150 Redwing roosted there on the 18th. A Jay which was first seen at Singleton early in January was seen again on the 26th of this month.

At Fleetwood 12 Snow Buntings were on the beach near the Marine Lake on the 5th February.

Luckiest birds of the month - were the 2 Grey Partridge which flew past a certain ironmongery shop on Vicarage Lane, Blackpool at dusk on the 1st.. One unfortunately hit the bridge, falling into the road. It lay there for a while and ....you won't believe this ....moved to the side of the pavement and actually flew off!

For details of B.O.E.E counts see tables at end of Newsletter.

Contributors : C.J Band    D.J. Berry    L.G Blacow    A. Dawe    P. Guy  
A.J Hinchliffe    G. Hulme    D. Jackson    M. Jones  
S.M Meredith    M. Myerscough    P.G.D Morgan    P. Scholes  
G.R Smith    E. Stirling

#### DIARY DATES

Sponsored Bird Race : Sunday May 7th.

Fylde Bird Club Meetings : Wednesday May 17th  
Wednesday June 21st  
Wednesday July 19th  
Wednesday August 16th

Birds of Estuaries Count : Sunday May 21st.

Wyre Borough Council Organised Walk at Nickey Nook : Sunday June 4th.

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BIRDS OF ESTUARIES

H. Water 11.25 9.2  
Dull & Cool Fresh S.W Wind

8th January 1989

	Russell Point	121 Pool	Arm Hill	Lane Ends	Cockersands Point	Slascon Thurnham	Total
Gt. Crest				1		1	2
Cormorant				4		5	9
Mallard	2			1500	5	92	1599
Teal	25	220		800		33	1078
Wigeon				500		21	521
Goldeneye	3						3
Merganser		14		2	2	18	36
Shelduck		131		257		42	430
Pinkfoot				16			16
Mute Swan	*45	15					60 *F'wood M.L
Oystercatcher	5	830*		4665	16	288	5804 *fields off Jameson Rd.
Lapwing		65	800	1150		2050	4065
Ringed Plover	106				34		140
Grey Plover			1	246	2		249
Golden Plover				192		150	342
Turnstone	397		6	2	102	36	543
Snipe			33	9			42
Curlew			86	427		42	555
Blacktail			1				1
Bartail	1		1	51		120	173
Redshank	256		340	391	295	40	1322
Knot				4000			4000
Dunlin	48		1	3230	29	210	3518
Sanderling	1						1



BIRDS OF ESTUARIES

12th February 1989

Dull. Occ. sunny periods  
Strong W.Wind Cool

High Water 15.30 8.9m

	Rossall Bint	ICI Pool	Arm Hill	Lane Erls	Cockersands Bint	Glasson Thurnham	TOTAL
Gt.Crested Grebe				4	1		5
Cormorant				13		1	14
Mallard		14	31	326		41	412
Teal		15	77	226		26	344
Wigeon				80		27	107
Pintail				23			23
Goldeneye		3					3
Eider				43			43
Merganser			4	4	1	3	12
Shelduck		2	77	189		42	310
Pink Foot				11			11
Mute Swan		4				2	6
Oystercatcher	18	300	477	7160	140	341	8436
Lapwing		6	590	580		160	1336
Ringed Plover	95				12		107
Grey Plover				211	12	30	253
Golden Plover				127		300	427
Turnstone	485			19	40	10	554
Snipe				2			2
Curlew			76	365		74	515
Bar Tail			2	305		25	332
Redshank	369	64	380	374		34	1221
Spotted Red			1	1			2
Knot				5900	250	90	6240
Dunlin	171		16	7785	140	340	8452

